United Nations DP/2017/33

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
18 August 2017

Original: English

Second regular session 2017
5 - 11 September 2017, New York
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the Strategic Plan, global programme and regional programmes, 2014-2017

Context, background and findings

1. In accordance with the medium-term evaluation plan for 2014-2017 endorsed by the Executive Board in decision 2014/4, in 2017 the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) conducted an evaluation of the Strategic Plan, global programme and regional programmes to review UNDP development results and inform the next strategic plan. The evaluation was preceded by the assessment of institutional effectiveness led jointly by IEO and the Office for Audit and Investigations (OAI), the findings and recommendations of which were presented to the Executive Board at the 2017 annual session, with the management response.

2. The evaluation was guided by five parameters and corresponding criteria measuring the success of UNDP in: (a) identifying issues consistent with its mandate and strategically positioning the organization; (b) contributing to national and subnational policies, institutional capacities and resources; (c) establishing and maintaining policy and interinstitutional dialogues; (d) mobilizing actors to address relevant development and crisis-related issues; and (e) enabling partnerships to accelerate development progress. Ten questions were used to measure the extent to which UNDP has succeeded to drive change in the areas prioritized by the Strategic Plan including in crisis and post-crisis settings; what specific contributions it made to strengthening national institutional and human capacities, situating norms and facilitating adoption and implementation of norms and practices in all types of contexts; what institutional measures were effective in enhancing UNDP performance; and what roles UNDP played in influencing global and regional dialogues, coordinating the United Nations system through the resident coordinator function and establishing global, regional and country-level partnerships.

3. UNDP management notes and appreciates the comprehensive IEO approach to data and evidence collection through over 30 country case studies, additional desk reviews and surveys and over 1,000 interviews with UNDP staff, implementing partners and other relevant actors. The report also integrates findings and recommendations of the thematic evaluations conducted within the framework of the current Strategic Plan which UNDP is already addressing through the management responses that the Executive Board has approved.

17-14395 (E)

Please recycle

4. UNDP management welcomes the evaluation and agrees overall with its findings, conclusions and recommendations which will be duly taken into account in the strategic plan, 2018-2021 and in related projects, programmes and efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness and performance. Regular updates on the status of implementation of the management response will be made available publicly in the Evaluation Resource Centre in accordance with the evaluation policy.

5. Key engagement principles that guided the formulation and implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 highlighted the UNDP commitment to new ways of programming at all levels including through empowering the poor, giving voice and opportunities to the marginalized through partnerships with civil society, the private sector and other non-State actors, mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment and broadening South-South and triangular cooperation.

6. The 2014-2016 cumulative review of the Strategic Plan that was presented to the Executive Board at the 2017 annual session (DP/2017/15) reported that UNDP development results were on track, with progress achieved for 32 of the 38 outputs representing 75 per cent or more of the total results expected by 2017. For five of the six remaining outputs, progress ranged from 62 to 74 per cent of the 2017 targets, due to external factors (funding delays, changes in government priorities or counterparts, natural disasters, deteriorating security situations) and/or suboptimal risk management and unrealistic target setting. UNDP management believes that the actual development performance is owed equally to the consolidation of corporate policy and programme support functions and to the great progress in programme alignment, both at country level with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and corporately with the Strategic Plan, as also noted by the assessment of institutional effectiveness. The stronger alignment and quality programming helped the organization to advance delivery on its promises despite the increasingly constrained resource environment and growing social and environmental fragility.

7. In terms of its commitment to building a results culture through higher quality of programmes and projects, evidence-based programme management, accountability and learning, UNDP management is pleased to acknowledge that according to the 2016 partnership survey, 66 per cent of partners consider that UNDP delivers high-quality programmes, an increase of 5 per cent over 2015, and 62 per cent believe that UNDP applies a robust results framework, up 6 per cent from 2015. The number of partners considering that UNDP delivers "value for money" and is cost-effective has also increased by 5 per cent.

Findings and conclusions regarding UNDP development results

8. UNDP management notes with appreciation the evaluation's extensive recognition of the organization's critical role and achievements across areas of intervention and development contexts, and remains committed to continuing progress towards poverty eradication, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and resilience as fundamental pillars of sustainable development. The relevance of the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) approach to integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in national plans and programmes, as stressed by the evaluation, has been confirmed by Governments and partners. Since August 2016, UNDP has completed 15 MAPS missions, with another 17 to be conducted by end-2017 with increasing participation of United Nations agencies and development partners.

9. Owing to the direct engagement of UNDP, the UNDAF guidance adopted in 2017 integrates MAPS as a system-wide methodology and tool for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a systematic, evidence-informed and results-focused manner.

10. Furthermore, for policy coherence and effective country support, in line with General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR), in the formulation of their next strategic plans (2018-2021), four funds and programmes, including UNDP, committed to collaborative approaches in the five priority areas of poverty eradication; gender equality and women's empowerment; prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace; climate change; and sustainable data.

Joint work and results monitoring will trickle down to country programmes and projects to enhance contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable development pathways

11. UNDP management is very pleased to note the evaluation's positive findings regarding the critical UNDP contribution to poverty reduction in the current Strategic Plan through a multidimensional approach that includes designing and establishing sustainable social protection systems; coupling of poverty reduction and environmental protection for sustainable development; increasing investment in productive capacities; and improved management of social and natural capital and risks. As reflected in the report on the implementation of recommendations of the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction (DP/2016/26) presented to the Executive Board at the 2016 second regular session, UNDP has strengthened its engagement with civil society on poverty issues, including through the Civil Society Advisory Committee, and adopted a multidisciplinary, targeted approach to poverty reduction through all programmes and projects.

12. The sustainability of results enabled by UNDP, including jobs created and livelihoods supported, is an important component of the quality standards used to assess programmes and projects from design to closure. Rigorous gender analyses in the formulation of programmes and projects and the inclusion of gender results and the gender marker are corporate requirements for all UNDP interventions. Management commitments made in response to the 2015 independent evaluation of the UNDP contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment are thoroughly monitored and reported to the Executive Board through both the annual report of the Administrator and the report on the implementation of the gender equality strategy. Under the new gender strategy for the period 2018-2021, UNDP will continue to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in all programmes and projects, pursue commitments under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and use the Gender Seal to promote behavior change in both the public and private domains.

13. Recognizing the importance of targeting development interventions for sustainable results, UNDP, in consultation with other United Nations funds and programmes, has prepared a methodology to identify excluded categories and improve targeting to ensure no one is left behind. The methodology will be used in the formulation of the new results and resources frameworks and systematic monitoring of all programmes and projects.

14. UNDP management also wishes to clarify that the process of introducing environmental and social safeguards in programming was initiated in 2008, before the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) had safeguard policies in place. In response to the 2010 evaluation of the UNDP contribution to environmental management for poverty reduction, which noted that elaboration of safeguards beyond screening could enhance cross-sectoral coordination for poverty evaluation and environmental protection, UNDP decided to institute safeguards as articulated in the management response. The deliberate adoption of social and environmental standards, ahead of the rest of the United Nations system, was one of the reasons that UNDP was able to gain early accreditation to the GCF. The current screening procedures are under review to identify how the screening has informed programme design and to what extent integration of the standards has led to more sustainable results.

15. The evaluation's positive assessment of the performance of UNDP as a GEF implementing partner is evidenced by the $3.13 billion grant investment which UNDP helped to disburse in 143 countries; the grants leveraged another $14.12 billion in co-financing, so that $17.25 billion was invested in the environment and sustainable development priorities of these countries during the Strategic Plan period.

16. The evaluation did not cover the work of UNDP in climate change beyond global and regional processes and support to nationally determined contributions. A fuller picture would have been offered by an analysis of the extensive work on climate change adaptation, forests and the critically important climate mitigation-energy nexus, disaster risk reduction and sustainable energy programming including in post-disaster and conflict recovery settings.

Inclusive and democratic governance

17. UNDP is pleased to receive solid recognition of its contribution to improved governance and State-society engagement including through dialogues with parliaments, Governments and civil society, support to democratic reforms and improved public administration, local access to public information, citizens' participation, accountability, rule of law, electoral systems, peacebuilding and basic service delivery. UNDP also notes the evaluation's conclusion that consolidation of support to conflict prevention, governance and peacebuilding under one unit has enabled a more integrated and holistic approach to building peace and preventing conflict.

18. In response to the evaluation's finding that addressing democratic governance issues at times has been excessively prudent and consequently some opportunities were missed, management wishes to explain that UNDP takes a development approach in responding to country priorities, respecting national ownership and strengthening institutional and individual capacities for full adoption of reforms, led by national actors. In so doing, UNDP aligns itself with the principles of effective development cooperation as reflected in the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action and other global instruments. Fragility-sensitive, risk-informed governance interventions should not be seen as overly cautious approaches or as a leadership deficit.

19. The evaluation's findings and conclusions regarding the critical role of UNDP in advancing democratic governance as an essential driver for inclusive growth, human development, peace and resilience provide the necessary evidence for this area of work.

Resilience building

20. The UNDP commitment to a risk-informed approach to development will continue to guide the formulation and implementation of its strategic plan, programmes and projects. Theories of change will draw systematically on risk analyses, and interventions will integrate fragility-sensitive principles and approaches. Management of risks from prevention to reduction and recovery efforts will remain at the centre of UNDP support to countries and populations in need, in line with the broader United Nations agenda. This support will draw on partnerships that are not limited by corporate structures, similar to the response to the Ebola crisis and other interventions.

Global and regional programmes

21. With respect to the evaluation's findings and conclusions regarding the global and regional programmes, management appreciates the importance of these instruments in positioning UNDP, defining its contributions to global and regional public goods and enabling country-level development progress and integrated results. The programmes allow UNDP to engage in global and regional dialogues, development research and policy consultations with regional and global organizations, and assess opportunities to strengthen its long-term relevance and competitiveness.

22. Management appreciates the evaluation's approach of reviewing the performance of the five regional programmes together, as this has produced findings that are useful both to individual regional bureaux and to UNDP at the corporate level despite major differences in the size, content and objectives of those programmes.

23. Regarding cross-cutting programmatic issues and organizational effectiveness, UNDP remains committed to implementing the management responses to relevant evaluations and the assessment of institutional effectiveness as endorsed by the Executive Board in decision 2017/12.

Annex. Key evaluation recommendations and UNDP management response

Recommendation 1				
Support for fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals should be a cross-cutting issue for all UNDP country offices. Integrated approaches to development are essential for fulfilment of the Goals and should be pursued where possible, taking national contexts and implementation efficiency into consideration.				
Management response: UNDP management agrees with this recommendation. UNDP will continue and further expand its support to national partners in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans, through the MAPS missions and other forms of support together with other United Nations development system partners. UNDP will provide policy support to countries through the application of tools and quantitative methodologies that can help Governments to make informed decisions on prioritization and implementation of the Goals in line with national priorities and context. Upon request from Governments, UNDP is committed to supporting countries in the follow-up and review of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal fulfillment through the voluntary national reviews as part of the formal process that culminates at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Following the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) guidelines for preparation of country-led national Sustainable Development Goal reports and on the request of Governments, UNDP is supporting the production of the first cohort of reports, which include in-depth national and subnational reviews of the countries' processes of monitoring and reviewing national implementation of the Goals.				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Status	**Comments**
Roll out and support the UNDG MAPS approach at in response to national requests, together with UNDG and other development partners	Ongoing (since August 2016; on demand)	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS); regional bureaux; resident coordinators/resident representatives		
Upon requests from Governments, support countries in efforts to follow-up and review progress towards Goal fulfilment through voluntary national reviews, and support for Sustainable Development Goal country reports.	Ongoing	BPPS and regional bureaux, in support of resident coordinators/resident representatives		

Recommendation 2				
The overarching strategic objective of UNDP — supporting the poorest of the poor and the most marginalized members of society — remains valid. Future resources and programming should aim to help countries accelerate the achievement of development results especially for those left behind, based on fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.				
Management response: UNDP management agrees with this recommendation, and the 2030 Agenda's ambition of "leaving no one behind" will be proposed as an important element of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, including in the integrated results and resources framework (IRRF). UNDP intends to implement this recommendation through its support to national and local partners on the Sustainable Development Goals, and including through tools and promoting development solutions identified through South-South and triangular cooperation, and fostering partnerships that have a strong potential to harness transformational change and support achievement of the 2030 Agenda on the ground.				
Drawing on practices and lessons learned through programmes and projects, continue the development and support of the conceptual framework and associated tools for a more integrated and effective approach to multidimensional poverty.	Ongoing	Conceptual framework: BPPS; Delivery organization-wide Tools development: BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux		
A corporate "leave no one behind" methodology for tracking excluded groups, targeting and access support to development benefits will be integrated in all results and resources frameworks for programmes and projects.	January 2018	BPPS in consultations with regional bureaux and country offices.		
Recommendation 3				
UNDP should retain its global reach. Programming in middle-income countries should align with the Sustainable Development Goals and other global frameworks, placing vulnerable populations at the forefront while seizing opportunities to expand assistance at subnational levels.				

Management response:

UNDP management agrees with this recommendation. UNDP supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in conjunction with the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, to ensure that countries make effective use of all available resources and means to advance their development goals. Through dedicated methodologies for development finance assessments and integrated financing solutions, UNDP assists Member States in the development of their integrated national financing frameworks linking planning, budgeting, partnerships and resource mobilization as requested by the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. Recognizing the specific challenges facing middle-income countries (MICs) in continuing development process in a fundamentally different financing environment, UNDP will consider continuing to undertake development finance assessments in MICs.

The new UNDAF guidance, issued in February 2017, informs UNDP programming in MICs and focuses on alignment with global frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. The guidance prioritizes leaving no one behind and financing strategies that ensure continuity in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP will continue supporting localization of the 2030 Agenda as a central focus of support through the MAPS approach.

Continue to support formulation and implementation of UNDAFs addressing context specific challenges and leaving no-one behind	Ongoing	Country offices; tools development: BPPS and Articulation of Territorial Networks Initiative Regional bureaux: country programme development tailored to national contexts and aligned to the Strategic Plan		
Conduct development finance assessments and support development of Integrated National Financing Frameworks in line with the Addis Abeba Agenda for Action	Ongoing	BPPS, regional bureaux, country offices		

Recommendation 4

UNDP should strongly emphasize its climate change adaptation capabilities and services in the next strategic plan. The UNDP national and subnational scope of service, capabilities for urban and rural development planning, governance and risk assessment, experience managing multi-partner trust funds and decades of environmental protection and disaster risk reduction and recovery work provide a platform from which to ably assist national and subnational governments to meet this global development challenge. Specific attention should be paid to the climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction linkages.

Management response:

UNDP management agrees with the recommendation and intends to expand its work in the area of adaptation, in close coordination and synergy with disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts. As the evaluation acknowledged, there has been good progress in integrating the DRR and adaptation portfolios at country and regional levels, which could be further systematized and institutionalized throughout all of UNDP.

In response to the growing demands to support climate action and DRR, UNDP has already scaled up and expanded assistance to countries to integrate climate change adaptation and DRR into their subnational/national policies, plans, and strategies. Efforts towards integrated approaches to climate change adaptation and DRR are being pursued in various regional and country programmes and projects. As the co-facilitator of the United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action, member of the Climate Principals Group and member of the Climate Core Group, UNDP will further systematize and institutionalize this integrated approach throughout all policies, programmes and projects and its work with partner agencies and stakeholders.

UNDP is playing an increasingly significant role in supporting countries to mobilize climate finance, including through the GCF, to undertake adaptation actions for climate-resilient development. UNDP is uniquely positioned to accelerate adaptation services, building on its decade-long portfolio, and has been expanding its technical capacity. For instance, GCF project development is being undertaken through expanded task teams that include experts from different technical areas (social and environmental safeguards, gender and economic analysis) to support the scale and scope of adaptation investments to which countries aspire. UNDP will continue to expand its roster of experts to deliver adaptation services at global, regional and national levels.

Develop long-term agreements for roster of experts including climate scientists, safeguard specialists, gender experts, economists, proposal development and various thematic experts.	July 2018	BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux		
Finalize and disseminate the draft integrated strategy note on climate change, DRR and sustainable energy to articulate the UNDP corporate approach and offer on delivering integrated services at global, regional and country levels.	Early 2018	BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux		

Finalize draft tool for practitioners on integrating DRR/climate change adaptation into development planning and budgeting and strengthen the community of practice and relevant knowledge networks	Early 2018	BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux		
Recommendation 5				
Recognizing that governance is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP should be proactive in supporting sectoral governance approaches and more persuasive in promoting democratic governance reforms.				
Management response: UNDP management takes note of the recommendation and concurs that governance is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP strives to be proactive in supporting sectoral governance approaches and to be persuasive in promoting democratic governance reform, while fully recognizing that its support for reforms is based on requests from national Governments in line with national contexts and priorities. UNDP governance work builds on long-standing broad, and innovative partnerships with international, national and local actors to create an enabling environment for sustainable peace and development to take root. For example, the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections is one of the flagship mechanisms that UNDP employs to deliver coordinated rule of law assistance. Co-led by UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the mechanism brings together the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities to facilitate joint planning and programming and resource mobilization in service of the whole system. UNDP also works with the Department of Political Affairs on conflict prevention and electoral assistance.				
Through engagement in MAPS missions and support to the SDG agenda, identify entry points for innovative sectoral governance approaches and new opportunities to realign programmatic support in democratic governance and conflict prevention as a key enabler of the Sustainable Development	Ongoing	BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux, resident coordinators/resident representatives and country offices		The Inter-Parliamentary Union/UNDP self-assessment toolkit, *Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals* and the UNDP/Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption/Islamic Development Bank handbook, *Parliament's Role in Implementing the Sustainable Development*

Goals				Goals, were launched in 2017. Implementation is planned via parliamentary programming to promote climate action;[1], prevent HIV/AIDS and advance other thematic development priorities.
Through the UNDP partnership with OHCHR and the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions, scale up joint support to national human rights institutions as key independent bodies to promote and protect human rights and ensure that no-one gets left behind.	Ongoing	BPPS in consultation with regional bureaux, resident coordinators/resident representatives and country offices	On track	A letter of intent between the partners to scale up joint support to national human rights institutions was signed in 2017 and a draft programing approach has been formulated
Recommendation 6				
Analysis of institutional capacities at the national level should guide UNDP governance programming in countries affected by conflict. Governance support needs to be targeted to critical government functions that are essential to stability. UNDP should more strategically support Sustainable Development Goal 16 and related intergovernmental agreements on peacebuilding and State-building.				

[1] See http://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/8847, Evaluation of the EC Contribution to the Parliamentary Action for Renewable Energy (PARE) Project, which found that the project played a key role in the enactment of a sustainability clause in the new Constitution of Tunisia, in doubling the renewable energy budget in India in 2013/2014, and in bringing into effect the Sustainable Energy Development Authority in Bangladesh.

Management response:

UNDP gives specific consideration to this recommendation in its strategic plan, 2018-2021 which is currently under formulation. Given the strategic importance of Goal 16 for the entire 2030 Agenda, UNDP has been instrumental in launching the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, which brings together Member States, civil society and the private sector, supported by a group of United Nations partner entities. UNDP is also closely engaged in the piloting of Goal 16 monitoring in cooperation with the Open Government Partnership and the Community of Democracies.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the peace and development agendas, UNDP will continue to engage in international networks such as the International Network on Conflict and Fragility, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building and its strategic relationship with the g7+ group of countries, having signed a memorandum of understanding in 2016. As part of that engagement, UNDP in 2016 developed "SDG-Ready", the UNDP offer on Sustainable Development Goal implementation in fragile situations. UNDP will continue to advocate for the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States internationally as well as at country level, promoting the principles of the New Deal in aid coordination, use of country systems, Sustainable Development Goal implementation, the Sustaining Peace Agenda and peacebuilding and State-building efforts.

In June, 2017 the United Nations and the World Bank completed and officially released the first joint diagnostic framework on core government functions in fragile and conflict-affected settings, for which UNDP has played a leading role within the United Nations system. The framework includes a set of joint principles for assessing critical government functions that are essential to stability, peacebuilding and State-building processes. Its objective is to provide an initial assessment of key issues, priorities and entry points around the six core government functions of executive coordination at the centre of government, local governance, public financial management, civil service, security sector and aid management. UNDP is already providing support in a number of countries based on the diagnostic, including the Central African Republic, Libya and South Sudan, and initial discussions are underway to apply some aspects in Cameroon and Yemen. UNDP is working through the Inter-Agency Platform on Core Government Functions (co-chaired by UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs) to embed this framework in existing assessment and planning processes such as recovery and peacebuilding assessments and conflict-related development analyses.

Continue to engage in international forums on peacebuilding and State-building.	Ongoing	BPPS (Strategic Positioning Unit (SPU), Governance and Peacebuilding Unit		
Apply core government function diagnostic framework in fragile and conflict-affected countries	Ongoing	BPPS/Governance and Peacebuilding in collaboration with regional bureaux, resident coordinators/resident representatives and country offices		

Recommendation 7				
UNDP should retain resilience as a distinct area of work under the next strategic plan so that stakeholders see this remaining a core area of the UNDP service offering. To strengthen the coherence of its crisis risk-reduction and recovery support, UNDP should continue to refine the roles and scope of service of BPPS and the Crisis Response Unit.				
Management response: UNDP agrees with the recommendation and will consider its approach to resilience building in the next strategic plan, 2018-2021, drawing on findings and recommendations of an external evaluation of the lessons learned from its role in early recovery coordination. The UNDP approach to early recovery coordination will be revisited in light of the QCPR and the New Way of Working. UNDP takes note of the recommendation about strengthening the coherence of its crisis prevention and recovery support, while recognizing that details regarding potential reforms of the United Nations peace and security architecture and wider development system will also guide UNDP work in these areas.				
Review any financial, organizational and structural implications stemming from the new strategic plan, the SG priorities and wider United Nations reforms, to ensure a strong, coherent/integrated and well-resourced UNDP approach on crisis prevention, response and recovery.	Q1 2018	Executive Office/BPPS/CRU/RBx		
Recommendation 8				
UNDP should strengthen implementation of its gender policies, taking measures to ensure adequate funding to mainstream gender across all programming areas. Work on gender equality and women's empowerment should not be confined to a gender team alone but should ensure that all large programmes have dedicated gender expertise. Specific attention needs to be paid to such areas as environment, energy and crisis response, where gender mainstreaming remains weak.				
Management response: UNDP agrees with the recommendation and aims to address it in the forthcoming gender equality strategy which will include a more robust gender architecture, stronger accountability mechanisms and budgetary commitments as well as reporting targets. Progress will be reported through a strengthened Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and the annual report to the Executive Board. Emphasis will be placed on				

strengthening partnerships with UN-Women and other technical partners to deliver gender results across all programming areas.				
Formulate the new gender equality strategy to incorporate recommended actions and mainstream gender across thematic areas and present it to the Executive Board at the first regular session 2018 in line with the new strategic plan, 2018-2021	January 2018	BPPS/Gender Team		
Recommendation 9				
UNDP should take a more systematic approach to South-South cooperation, selecting specific areas and partners for expanded cooperation.				
Management response: UNDP agrees with the recommendation and commits to strengthening its systematic approach to South-South and triangular cooperation through leveraging opportunities offered by the implementation of the South-South cooperation corporate strategy. Through its strategic roles (knowledge broker, capacity builder and partnership facilitator), UNDP will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by continuously taking stock of the challenges facing developing countries, systematically fostering exchanges and partnerships, supporting policy frameworks and institutional capacities, stimulating targeted research to inform global policy dialogues and relying more heavily on country programming as an efficient way to leverage South-South cooperation at the national level. In addition, UNDP continues to support the UN Development System through hosting the UN Office for South-South cooperation.				
Strengthen country programming to ensure systematic mainstreaming of South-South cooperation in all programme frameworks as an enabler of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.	Mid-2018 for training and guidance for regional bureaux and country offices, then each country programme document cycle until end-2021	BPPS Development Impact Group (DIG) and Headquarters Project Appraisal Committee secretariat with support of regional bureaux		
Develop and roll out a support package to strengthen national	December 2019	BPPS DIG in consultation with regional bureaux		

capacities to access and expand South-South cooperation based on country typologies				
Recommendation 10				
UNDP should change the global programme into a service line for supporting staff positions at global and regional levels, as its shared deliverables and blurred boundaries make it unsuitable as a specific programme.				
Management response: UNDP management takes note of the recommendation. The relevance and role of programmatic instruments including the global and regional programmes will be further reviewed in the coming year(s). UNDP will explore the idea of converting the current global programme into a service line as one of the options going forward.				
Explore and select viable option and submit required documentation to the Executive Board	By January 2018	BPPS, BMS and the Executive Office		
Recommendation 11				
UNDP should determine specialties within its sustainable development, governance and resilience areas of work. This will help it build world-class technical expertise and focus its resources on building capacities in those areas.				
Management response: UNDP management agrees with this recommendation. UNDP is committed to having world-class technical expertise in the areas of sustainable development, governance and resilience. Once the new strategic plan is endorsed by the Executive Board later this year, UNDP will identify the specialized capacities needed to best implement these stated priorities and support country offices to respond to the priorities of national partners. The UNDP knowledge management strategy, which the evaluation recognizes as "comprehensive" and providing "considerable emphasis recognized as on knowledge facilitation and learning", asks UNDP to leverage knowledge management for identification, development, mobilization and management of talent and expertise in ways that allow the organization to draw from a pool of qualified practitioners and experts at any time, mobilize staff members to be available for ad-hoc initiatives and virtual projects. To realize this vision, UNDP is investing in the development of an improved, cost-effective mechanism to map and track staff expertise across the organization. Through improved personnel profiles and searches, this offering aims to assist staff and managers to identify expertise rapidly and systematically. This will also allow tracking of expertise to assess strengths and weaknesses in order to build and bolster capacities where needed. Regional bureaux will continue developing and implementing Sustainable Development Goal toolkits, and investing in the capacity of UNDP staff and other partners through trainings, community of practice meetings, and others.				

Review UNDP technical expertise against the priorities identified in the new strategic plan and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and develop an action plan for training and learning to address any gaps in capacity arising.	Mid-2018	BPPS/Governance and Peacebuilding Unit BPPS/Sustainable Development Unit BPPS/Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit in consultation with Executive Office and regional bureaux		
Continue development of a staff expertise mapping and search system ("PeopleSearch") to enable offices to easily locate subject matter experts and for UNDP to assess expertise globally against priority areas.	Q1 2018	BPPS/DIG Bureau of Management Services/Office of Information Management Services, Office of Human Resources		
Recommendation 12				
UNDP should reassess the roles and financial sustainability of the regional hubs, striving to make them centres of excellence for innovation and learning while expanding cooperation and partnerships with regional institutions. It should reduce overlap between regional and country-level programming.				
Management response: UNDP management takes note of this recommendation and will review the financial sustainability and roles of the regional hubs over the next Strategic Plan 2018-2021.				
Review financial sustainability of regional hubs	2018 -21	Executive Office/regional bureaux/BPPS		
Recommendation 13				
Regional programming, if better defined, has the potential to be a valuable tool to prioritize and organize UNDP regional engagement and support to country offices. UNDP should develop its regional programmes as frameworks, outlining the regional issues to be addressed and approaches to be followed. To maximize its activities at the regional level and position UNDP to make a meaningful contribution, there should be more focus on a select number of areas at the regional level. For regional programmes to be effective, the activities that are considered should be realistic and pay sufficient attention to regionality principles.				

Management response:
Management agrees with the recommendation that regional programmes should be developed as frameworks outlining the regional issues to be addressed and approaches to be followed within a select number of areas in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Formulation of the regional programmes, 2018-2021, guided by the 2030 Agenda will support distinct and specific regional public goods	January 2018	Regional bureaux		

Recommendation 14

UNDP should promote a results culture that encourages critical reflection and continuous organizational learning for improved results and institutional effectiveness.

Management response:

UNDP management agrees with this recommendation. As the Executive Board noted in several decisions, UNDP has made significant progress in strengthening its analytical capacities. To build a strong results culture across the organization, UNDP will streamline its results architecture, reporting and performance analysis systems to allow all parts of the organization to use results and evidence for learning and strategic decisions. During the current Strategic Plan cycle, UNDP developed an integrated corporate planning system to manage the programme and inform development and institutional performance analyses. The strength of the UNDP programme management was well recognized in the results-based management audit conducted by OAI in 2016, which rated the system satisfactory, the highest rate possible and the first to have been received for results-based management. To inform the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, UNDP also conducted analyses of lessons learned from results-oriented annual reports and decentralized evaluations. A complete roll-out of an upgraded knowledge sharing infrastructure; and the relaunch of the UNDP pubic library of knowledge products along with new mechanisms to measure their quality, reach and impact also took place within this strategic plan timeframe.

To ensure programme management and evaluation support learning, UNDP works on: (a) designing a tool for capturing quality lessons learned in the corporate system and the Evaluation Resource Centre; (b) fostering exchange and learning through recently relaunched knowledge networks and an improved corporate social networking platform, in addition to a newly established One United Nations network for inter-agency collaboration, exchange and learning (as per a recommendation of the QCPR); and (c) offering dedicated training and outreach to empower staff to use these mechanisms effectively for learning and knowledge exchange. UNDP has taken practical steps to operationalize self-learning from experiments, from what works and what does not, through the establishment of the Innovation Facility in 2014. A key component of the mandate of this facility is the provision of risk capital and advisory services to country offices to test new approaches to solve development problems. The Innovation Facility documents successes, learning and lessons in its annual reviews and through regular blogging by offices supported by the facility.

Streamline results monitoring, reporting and analysis systems allowing all units to view and analyse UNDP-wide results and resources data (by strategic plan outcomes/ outputs, countries, country typologies, etc.) for learning and decision-making	Q3 2018	BPPS/DIG and Executive Office		
Strengthen UNDP analytical tools and capacities in order to ensure evidence-based decision-making at corporate, regional and country office levels	Q4 2019	BPPS/DIG and Executive Office		
Recommendation 15				
UNDP should increase the involvement of the Office of Human Resources (OHR) in strategic decision-making, especially in future institutional restructuring. Given the increasing complexity of programme delivery, inter-agency work and collaboration with a range of partners including civil society, investment in developing skills in leadership, relationship management and management across complex systems should be prioritized.				
Management response: UNDP management agrees with this recommendation. UNDP is committed to ensuring pivotal importance of human resources matters, including OHR representation at early stages of decision-making.				
In 2017, a training programme for newly appointed resident representative focused on leadership development in complex environment and collaboration with partners.	2017	OHR	Completed	
Leadership development programmes (LDP) invest	Ongoing			LDP I / II (ongoing) LDP III

in developing skills in complex problem solving, relationship and partnership development for managers and supervisors. supervisors and managers to develop skills including in complex problem solving, in relationship building and in partnership building.				(2018)
Recommendation 16				
UNDP should transition from political budgeting to a more risk- and results-based budgeting process, to more effectively link results to resources. This will help mobilize funds and better highlight investment gaps to donors. UNDP is being held accountable to a corporate strategic plan without predictable and adequate resources. UNDP should work with funders and influence groups to raise understanding of the unintended effects of reductions in core funding. Focus should be on bringing the donor community together to work more effectively on integrated multidimensional approaches to support fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, while contributing to partner country priorities.				
Management response: The UNDP management concurs with this recommendation. To build solid results to resources linkages, UNDP will strengthen its results based budgeting process through the analysis of demand (from country programme documents) and supply (from pipelines and donor intelligence). To better analyze resources invested and results achieved, UNDP will establish a close link between the IRRF indicator targets and the resource plan in the Integrated Budget, which will enable the organization to analyze investment gaps and facilitate dialogue with stakeholders.				
Set baselines, milestones and targets for IRRF indicators by linking BMTs with the corporate resource plan	Q1 2018	BPPS/DIG, BMS/Office of Finance and Resource Management (OFRM), Executive Office		
Analyse resources invested and results achieved to identify investment gaps during the midterm review of the strategic plan	Q1 2019	BPPS/DIG, BMS/OFRM, Executive Office		

In line with corporate RM strategy for the new SP, introduce a partnership, pipeline and resource mobilization strategy as part of programme development to identify resource gaps that are critical to deliver the results of the programme, and to advocate with funding partners based on the investment gap.	Q1 2018	BPPS/DIG and Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy		